
SHAW NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ordinance 59400 (Committee Substitute Board Bill No. 326)

An ordinance concerning the designation of the "Shaw Neighborhood" as an historic district: containing legislative findings and declarations with respect to the procedures followed with respect to a petition for designation of the "Shaw Neighborhood" as an historic district: designating the "Shaw Neighborhood" as an historic district, and describing the boundaries of such district; containing, identifying and providing for maintenance of a general location map of such district, which also evaluates the architectural significance and the current economic condition of such district; describing the advantages to residents of such district and to the City which may be anticipated as a consequence of historic district designation: containing, identifying and providing for maintenance of a plat at a scale of not more than 300 feet to the inch indicating the existing uses of all properties within the district; stating a general plan for the district indicating planned or proposed restoration, development and demolition within the district; prescribing historic standards to be applied within the district; stating amendments to the existing zoning classification and boundaries necessary to conform to the proposed plan; with a severability clause and an emergency clause.

WHEREAS, Ordinance 57986 (SS. 24.04.010 to 24.20.020, inclusive. Revised Code St. Louis, 1980. Anno.), provides a procedure for designation of historic districts; and

WHEREAS, a petition for designation of the Shaw Neighborhood as hereinafter defined as a historic district was filed with the Heritage and Urban Design Commission by the alderman for the ward within which such proposed district is located on May 29, 1984; and

WHEREAS, the maps, statements, plats, plans and standards, which SS 24.12.070 Rev. Code St. Louis 1980 Anno. Provides shall be submitted with such a petition, either had been filed with the Heritage and Urban Design Commission by a neighborhood organization before the filing of such petition or were maintained and possessed by such Commission when such petition was filed; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 24.12.080 the Heritage and Urban Design Commission transmitted to the Director of the Community Development Agency. Arts and Humanities Commissioner, and the Acting President of the Board of Public Service, copies of such petition and certain related materials; and

WHEREAS, the Community Development Commission, Arts and Humanities Commission, and Board of Public Service have reviewed the petition, and exhibits and documents relating thereto, and have reported thereon to the Board of Aldermen in writing; and

WHEREAS, the Heritage and Urban Design Commission held a public hearing on July 20, 1984, within the time and after giving the notice by publication and placarding prescribed by Section 24.12.100 Rev. Code St. Louis 1980 Anno.; and

WHEREAS, at such hearing numerous residents expressed their views respecting the proposed district; and

WHEREAS, on July 26, 1984, the Heritage and Urban Design Commission approved the petition as submitted; and

WHEREAS, this bill could not be prepared within 45 days after such approval, due to a shortage of staff of the Heritage and Urban Design Commission, but has been transmitted with the historic district plan to the petitioner for historic district designation, the clerk of the board of aldermen, the community development commission, and the mayor; and

WHEREAS, the appropriate standing committee of the Board of Aldermen has conducted a public hearing on this bill, after causing notices to be given in the time and manners provided by SS24.12.150 Rev. Code St. Louis 1980 Anno; and

WHEREAS, designation of the Shaw Neighborhood as a historic district is in the public interest and will promote the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the provisions of Ordinance 57986 were substantially complied with with respect to the historic district designation petition and the subsequent proceedings thereon; and

WHEREAS, such variances from such provisions as did occur did not cause prejudice to any person; and

WHEREAS, further delay in designation of the Shaw Neighborhood as an historic district would be prejudicial to the public interest and contrary to the desires of a majority of the residents of such proposed district who have heretofore expressed views on such designation.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION ONE.

The Board of Aldermen of the City of St. Louis hereby finds and declares that, with respect to the petition for historic district designation for the Shaw Neighborhood and the subsequent proceedings thereon:

- a. The provisions of Ordinance 57986 (SS. 24.04.010 to 24.20.020, inclusive and specifically SS. 24.12.060 to 24.12.150 Rev. Code St. Louis 1980 Anno.), have been substantially complied with by the Heritage and Urban design Commission, community development and arts and humanities commissions, board of public service and the Board of Aldermen;
- b. Any variances from such provisions as may have occurred were harmless and not prejudicial to any person;
- c. Further delay in designation of the Shaw Neighborhood (as hereinafter defined) as a historic district would be prejudicial to the public interest and contrary to the intent of Ordinance 57986.

SECTION TWO.

Notwithstanding its present zoning designation, the following area of the City of St. Louis, together with the improvements therein, is designated an historic district:

Beginning at the point of the intersection of the west line of Grand Avenue and the north line of DeTonty Avenue; thence westwardly along said north line of DeTonty Avenue, to its point of intersection with the east line of Tower Grove Avenue; thence southwardly along said east line, across all intervening streets and alleys, to its point of intersection with the south line of Magnolia Avenue; thence eastwardly along said south line to its point of intersection with the west line of Grand Avenue; thence northwardly along said west line across all intervening streets and alleys to its point of intersection with the north line of DeTonty Avenue, the point of beginning.

to be known as the Shaw Neighborhood Historic District. The boundaries of such District and the architectural significance of improvements therein are set forth in two maps captioned "Architectural Survey of Shaw Neighborhood ³ North and Architectural Survey of Shaw Neighborhood ³ South," both dated August, 1982, (hereinafter "the Map"). A copy of the Map is attached to the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen's copy of this Ordinance (the "green back copy"). Copies of the Map captioned by number shall at all times be maintained in the offices of the Register and of the Heritage and Urban Design Commission.

SECTION THREE.

- a. The historic, architectural, cultural and aesthetic significance of the Shaw Neighborhood Historic District is as follows:

The Shaw Neighborhood was once part of the outlying common fields of St. Louis known as the Prairie des Noyers ("Meadow of the Walnut Trees") laid out by French settlers in 1769. The neighborhood is historically significant in that it owes its development in the late 1800s and early 1900s to one of St. Louis' most generous and important benefactors, businessman and philanthropist Henry Shaw, for whom the neighborhood is named. Henry Shaw was born in Sheffield, England in 1800. He settled in St. Louis in 1819 and established a prosperous hardware business which served as a leading supplier to fur traders involved in the Indian trade. Shaw made his fortune by the age of forty, sold his business, and retired in 1839. In the 1840s, he began purchasing land in the Prairie des Noyers, west of the city limits, and by the mid-1850s owned the land now occupied by Tower Grove Park, Missouri Botanical Garden (also known as Shaw's Garden), and Shaw Avenue Place.

Both Tower Grove Park and Missouri Botanical Garden which border the proposed Shaw Neighborhood Historic District are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 277 acre Tower Grove Park, the second largest in the city, was designed by Englishman James Gurney (1831-1920) as an English walking park with grand drives and walks interspersed with colossal statutes, mini-lakes and gazebos. Most of the park's buildings, the main entrance at Grand Boulevard, and the bases of three thirty foot high bronze statutes were designed by the distinguished architect George I. Barnett (1815-1898) who was probably the most prominent architect in Missouri during the 19th century. The Park, which was donated to the city in 1867, is an excellent and well-preserved example of a public park of the late 1800s and is significant as a recreational, horticultural, and visual experience of a century ago.

The 70-acre Missouri Botanical Garden, which served as Henry Shaw's country estate, is recognized for its historical and architectural significance. As the first combination public garden and scientific plant research center of its kind in the United States, it is recognized as one of the botanical capitals of the world. Architecturally, it presents a homogeneous set of town and country structures designed by Barnett, as well as a series of greenhouses representing a technical evolution in greenhouse architecture.

The influence of Henry Shaw extended beyond his estate and park to Shaw Avenue Place where ten, homogeneous Victorian townhouses adorned with ornamental brick work and porches were built between 1879-1883 as a small suburban development on the Tower Grove estate. Shaw Place was inspired by a street in Shaw's native England and was designed by the architectural team of Barnett and Taylor. The houses, which represent a unique development in St. Louis architecture and subdivision planning, were carefully planned and maintained by Shaw as rental property to provide an endowment for Shaw's Garden.

The area which Shaw once described as "a beautiful prairie extending westward, uncultivated without trees or fences, but covered with tall, luxuriant grass," soon developed into a densely populated residential environment. Most of the housing in the neighborhood was constructed between 1880 and 1900 when most of the city's central western portion was being developed, however, some of the area's private streets (Magnolia Place, Flora Place) were not built until the period between 1900 and 1920. A wide variety of housing styles ranging from large, single-family homes to two- and four-family flats and multi-unit apartments were built in the district. Commercial facilities were developed along Grand Boulevard and 39th Street became a business/shopping center. Several institutional facilities, schools and churches were erected in the neighborhood, two of the most noteworthy of which are the Memorial Home for the Aged which has been designated as a local landmark under the guidelines of the City of St. Louis' Heritage and Urban Design Code, and the B'nai El Temple which is a registered national landmark.

The Memorial Home, a home for the elderly, has on its grounds the Beauvais Mansion, which was originally built as a home for Rene Beauvais, a well-known St. Louis silversmith. The mansion was erected about 1867 and is one of the few remaining Greek Revival Houses surviving in St. Louis. Following Beauvais' death, the house was established in 1882 as a home for the aged by the St. Louis Women's Christian Association. Between 1885 and 1916, four wings were added to the three-story, red brick structure.

The B'nai El Temple was constructed between 1905 and 1906. It is the oldest surviving structure built for a Jewish Congregation in St. Louis. It was designed by architect John L. Wees and it is an example of the Conservative Romanesque Revival Idiom with Byzantine massings. The structure became a parish high school for St. Margaret of Scotland Church in 1944, and served as a gymnasium and recreation center for the church until 1969 when it was sold to the city's Board of Education for use as an elementary school, a use which continued until the mid 1970s. In 1984 the structure

was adaptively reconstructed as 12 apartment units, under the National Register guidelines for historic properties. The impressive structure is a symbol of the Jewish contribution to St. Louis history and an excellent example of historic preservation.

1905 South Grand, the former Erastus H. Warner residence (1888-1889), is one of the most architecturally significant residential buildings in the District. Theodore Link, a noted St. Louis architect, was responsible for the design of this private residence and numerous major public buildings in St. Louis. It should be noted that this residence reflects the residential grandeur that once surrounded the Compton Hill Reservoir and Water Tower Park on South Grand, and that its renovation to landmark quality is currently pending, and will be a major element in the revitalization of South Grand Boulevard between Interstate 44 and Magnolia.

The proposed Shaw Neighborhood Historic District is thus significant in many ways. The neighborhood is part of Henry Shaw's Legacy to the City of St. Louis and services as a very vital connecting piece to the already recognized historic landmarks which border it: Tower Grove Park, Shaw's Garden, and the Compton Hill Water Tower, located west of Grand Blvd. The Compton Hill Water Tower, which was designed by Harvey Ellis and constructed between 1897-1899, provides a dramatic visual climax to Shaw Avenue and serves as the focal point for the neighborhood. Within the district are many structures which are both historically and architecturally significant, such as the old Memorial Home buildings, the B'nai El Temple structure, and the houses which form Shaw Avenue Place.

- b. The current economic condition of the Shaw Neighborhood Historic District, and the advantages to residents thereof and to the City which are anticipated as a result of historic district designation for such neighborhood are as follows:

Today, the Shaw Neighborhood is a neighborhood in transition. From the turn-of-the-century to the mid-1960s, the Shaw Neighborhood functioned as a solid, highly desirable residential neighborhood housing a rather diverse population. The area was adversely affected by the construction of Interstate 44 in the 1960s and by the growing popularity of the suburbs which prompted an exodus of many long-time residents. A more transient population and a high percentage of multi-unit flats whose owners did not live on the premises created further problems and many of the fine homes fell into disrepair. This period of decline appears to have ceased and the neighborhood is now regaining strength as many St. Louisans are rediscovering its many assets.

While many structures are currently being renovated in the neighborhood, there are many others in various stages of decline and disrepair. Greater incentives are needed to encourage more and better renovation efforts to stabilize and improve the total area. The historic district designation and the investment tax credits which it affords would help stimulate increased development in Shaw, and the accompanying preservation guidelines would insure that all renovation is done in accordance with the established rehab standards to insure that the historical character of the neighborhood is protected, enhanced, and perpetuated. A strong, revitalized Shaw Neighborhood will help preserve

the legacy of Henry Shaw and will contribute to the strength of the City of St. Louis through increased property values and the availability of quality housing stock.

SECTION FOUR.

A set of plats at a scale of not more than 300 feet to the inch, indicating the existing uses of all properties within the Shaw Neighborhood Historic District, captioned "Plat, Board Bill No. 326, 1/22/85" (hereinafter "the Plat") is attached to the Clerk of the Board of Aldermen's copy of this Ordinance (the "green back copy"). Copies of the Plat captioned so as to refer to this ordinance by number shall at all times be maintained in the offices of the Register and the Heritage and Urban Design Commission.

SECTION FIVE.

The following general plan for the Shaw Neighborhood Historic District is hereby adopted, to be implemented consistent with the standards in Section Six, and in accordance with and subject to the provisions of Ordinance 57986 (Sections 24.12.010 to 24.20.020, Rev Code. St. Louis, 1980. Anno.).

SECTION SIX.

(See Historic District Standards)

SECTION SEVEN.

No amendments to the existing zoning classification and boundaries are necessary to conform to the historic district plan.

SECTION EIGHT.

The Heritage and Urban Design Commission and the Office on Heritage and Urban Design shall be responsible for administration of this ordinance, as provided by, and subject to the provisions of Ordinance 57986 (÷24.12.010 to 24.20.020. Rev. Code, St. Louis 1980. Anno.), with appropriate assistance of other City departments or offices as provided by City Charter or ordinance.

SECTION NINE.

If any section or portion of a section of this ordinance is declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining sections and portions of sections shall remain in force and effect.

SECTION TEN.

This being an ordinance necessary for the immediate protection of the public health, safety and welfare, it is hereby declared to be an emergency ordinance pursuant to Article IV ÷20 of the St. Louis City Charter.

Approved: March 4, 1985.